Essay: ESP (English for specific purposes)
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Chapter One

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General Introduction

In the modern world, English has become the most dominant language in terms of use. Its status was consolidated by the spread of cultural ideologies mainly “Globalization” which promotes communication and interaction among people from all around the world. The main motto of this ideology is to create “Global citizens” that can communicate and correspond with each other. This could only be achieved by overcoming the language barrier that people from different speech communities would face. Thus, the need for a united language that serves as the common ground for them and facilitates their social, cultural and most importantly economic interactions became an urgent necessity. Hence, English filled that spot and it became “The Language of The world” or what many scholars call it “The lingua Franca of the modern world”.

Today, there are an increasing number of people who are learning English in order to “fit-in” the high demands of global economy and international communication. They are fully aware that English has become synonymous with social, economic and scientific development. Hence governments across the world have set out on aspiring instructive changes incorporating English more profoundly into their educational curricula in order to equip their learners with the linguistic dominator used and needed everywhere in the world. These courses are known as English for Specific Purposes (henceforth ESP).

Algeria, like any other developing country has adopted English in its educational programmes including the tertiary level where English is taught almost in all fields like Biology, Physics, Technology and Economics. Nonetheless, even if -hypothetically- English is integrated in all fields and taught for all levels .There is still a major handicap for students who cannot use the language appropriately for the required needs (educational and professional purposes), and also for teachers who lack the efficient training for ESP teaching which requires a methodology that is different from General English courses (GE).

The researcher has chosen the department of Economic and commercial Sciences at the University of Dr. Moulay Taher “Saida- in order to investigate the current status of ESP teaching by conducting a needs analysis for students to assess their level of awareness about the importance of learning English in their studies and how it may affect their level of motivation .

The present inquiry attempts to provide appropriate answers to the following question:
- To what extent is the ESP teaching /learning process efficient in terms of providing teachers and learners with appropriate environment in order to meet the final objectives of the ESP syllabus?

The aforementioned question generated the following sub-questions:
- What are the learners’ attitudes towards learning English in their field of study?
- Are the ESP teachers actually aware of the particularity of their courses?
- Are they giving adequate training and materials to cope with specific requirements of ESP courses?
- How to design an efficient ESP course that actually has well defined objectives and would eventually lead to concrete results?

The main hypothesis for this research is that the ESP Teaching/Learning process probably lacks concrete results which may be for both stakeholders (teachers and students) due to the absence of clear methodology of teaching and well-defined objectives.

Moreover, the above questions engendered the following sub-hypotheses:

I. There may be a disparity in the level of awareness of students about the necessity of English in their studies, i.e some of them acknowledge the fact that English is an integral part in their studies while others see it as a slot-filling module in their time table.

II ESP may be ambiguous for some instructors; some teachers can not differentiate between ESP and GE courses.
III. Perhaps, ESP teachers are not provided with any special materials or even a clear syllabus. IV. Designing an efficient ESP course may depend on knowing the actual needs of students and also detecting their linguistics problems. Thus, by attempting to address these problems, an efficient ESP course may be possible to design.

This work is divided into three main chapters:

The first chapter aims at exploring the theoretical background of ESP. It will shed light on the emergence of ESP, its various definitions and its types. In addition, the researcher would focus on ESP course design rationale as well as some key concept about syllabus design.

In the second chapter, the researcher will undertake a needs analysis in the department of Economic Sciences, at the University of Dr. Moulay Taher, Saida. Furthermore, the researcher will conduct a students’ questionnaire and a teachers’ interview in order to have an overall description of the teaching of English in the department under study.

Finally, in the third chapter, the researcher will interpret the data collected through the different research instruments used. Remedial suggestions would be recommended for the purpose of creating adequate conditions for effective ESP instruction.

1.1 Introduction:
The paramount importance of English has led to the expansion of the English language teaching arena. Hence, the implementation of English in the educational system and mainly on the tertiary level has become an inevitable necessity. Consequently, there was a high demand for English courses designed to cater the needs of the diversified university majors (Social Sciences, biology etc.). This goal-oriented approach is achieved by the teaching of a particular type of English commonly known as English for specific purposes, or simply (ESP).

The first part of this chapter reviews literature on the field of ESP, its various definitions and its branches. The Second part gives a clear idea about syllabus design and some key concepts in its methodology such as needs analysis, teaching materials and evaluation and assessment in this discipline.

1.2 ESP Genesis:
According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), ESP was not a ‘planned and coherent movement’ but it has emerged because of numerous unified trends. These trends have operated in a variety of ways around the world, but we can identify three main reasons common to the emergence of ESP.

The demands of a Brave New World:
The post Second World War witnessed an unprecedented expansion in scientific, technical and economic activity on an international scale. This expansion created a world unified and dominated by two forces – technology and commerce (Hutchinson & Waters 1987, p.6). An international language, thus, became an urgent necessity in order to adapt with the new “unified” globalized world. Consequently, English was “the key to the international currencies of technology and commerce”, it was the dominant language that everyone had to speak due to the political and economic power of the USA. This position was also consolidated by the Oil Crisis in the 1970’s which resulted in Western money and knowledge flowing into the oil-rich countries; the language of this knowledge became English.

This led to the emergence of a new category of people that consists of professionals who needed English to perform their jobs. However, the process of English learning/teaching they need was different from the conventional methods of learning a language which requires a deep and vast knowledge of the whole aspects of the target language (e.g. Grammar and literature); They had specific and well defined objectives.

A revolution in Linguistics
Another reason which had a tremendous impact on the emergence of ESP was a revolution in linguistics. Traditionally, Linguistics’ primary focus was studying the structural features of the language (e.g. Grammar). However, revolutionairy pioneers in linguistics shifted their focus to the ways in which language is used in real communication.

Focus on the learner
New developments in educational psychology also contributed to the rise of ESP, linguists emphasized on the psychological attributes that emphasized on the central importance of the learners and their attitudes to
learning. Learners were seen to have different needs and interest, which would have an important influence on their motivation to learn and therefore on the activeness of their learning (Hutchinson and Waters:987, p:08) This lent support to the development of courses in which relevance to the learners need and interests was paramount. The assumption underpinning this approach was that the clear relevance of the English course to their needs could improve the learners’ motivation and thereby learning better and faster. Eventually, this development exerted pressure on the language teaching profession to deliver the required goods. Whereas English had previously decided its own destiny, it now became subject to the wishes, needs and demands of people other than language teachers. (Hutchinson & Waters, 1987).

1.3 Definition of ESP

Defining ESP has proven to be so problematic to researchers that producing a simple and straightforward definition of ESP is not an easy task (Strevens 1987, p. 109) An important question may cross our minds is “what is ESP and how is it different from GE?”. In answering this question, ESP is defined as: “‘Goal oriented language learning.’” (Robinson, Pauline C. ed. Hywel Coleman, 1989, p 398) (qtd in Msc. Morena Bracaj, European Scientific Journal January 2014) This means that it is a set of exclusively designed courses tailored for the specific needs of learners (whether vocational or educational purposes). In this vein, Robinson defines ESP as “‘language in context’”. Similar to this view, Mackay and Mountford propose a definition of ESP emphasizing on the utility of learning English saying that: “‘a restricted repertoire of words and expressions selected from the whole language because that restricted repertoire covers every requirement within a well-defined context, task or vocation.’” (Mackay and Mountford, 1978: 4).

Concerning the difference between ESP and GE. This dichotomy is often ambiguous for English teachers. Robinson clearly states that: “‘the general with which we are contrasting the specific is that of general education for life, culture and literature oriented language course in which the language itself is the subject matter and the purpose of the course. The student of ESP, however, is learning English en route to the acquisition of some quite different body of knowledge and set of skills’” (Robinson 1980, p.6)

In this respect, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) claimed that the difference between GE and ESP is not merely bound with the existence of a need but rather the awareness of the need. Hence, the difference lies in the learners’ aims and purposes for learning. That is to say, GE learners the language aspire to master the language for daily use, whereas, ESP learners need specific and a limited set of linguistic repertoire to perform educational or professional tasks.

Hutchinson and Water (1987) state that ESP should be perceived as an “‘approach’” to teaching. Overall, ESP appeared as a multi-disciplinary branch to teach English for particular specialties. This branch of ELT deals more principally with learners’ needs so that learners will perform adequately in the target situation. (Smoak 2003:23)

1.4 Branches of ESP:

Under the umbrella of ESP there are a myriad of sub-divisions. Each of these division is strongly related to the concerned field of study.

“English for Academic Purposes”

As it name implies, English for Academic purposes (or simply EAP) is a branch of ESP that accentuate the educational needs of learners who need English in their studies. As Kennedy and Bolitho posit that: “EAP is taught generally within educational institutions to students needing English in their studies” (Kennedy
EAP courses are programmed in such situations to provide learners with specialized knowledge of the language so that they can be updated with the knowledge and keep abreast of the latest developments in their specialities. Typically, EAP learners should attain different skills which would contribute to their studies like listening to lectures, taking notes, reading in the specialized field, writing reports and research articles, and so on.

English for Occupational Purposes:

AOP is taught for learners who need English for vocational purposes. Thus, its teaching is activity-oriented where people may be obliged to use English as part of their everyday job. This is illustrated in the definition of Kennedy and Bolitho (1984:4) who state that: “EOP is taught in a situation in which learners need to use English as part of their work or profession.”

On the other hand, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) say that there is no clear-cut distinction between EAP and EOP because people can work and study at the same time:

“This is, of course, not a clear-cut distinction: people can work and study simultaneously; it is also likely that in many cases the language learnt for immediate use in a study environment will be used later when the student takes up, or returns to, a job” (Hutchinson and Waters 1987: p16)

English for Science and Technology:

EST due to the constant demands of scientists and technologists who need English in order to stay updated with the latest trends of scientific and technological developments. Some theorists consider EST as a sub-branch shared by EAP and EOP, Blue (2001) writes: “English for science and technology cuts across for occupational purposes and language for academic purposes, as it has both occupational and academic applications” (qtd in Hamche, 2014: 75)

1.4 ESP course Design

Course design refers to the planning and structuring of a course to achieve the needed goals. It is the outcome of number of elements: the result of the needs analysis, the course designer’s approach to syllabus and methodology, and existing materials (Robinson: 1991). It is a process that enables learners build up new knowledge on the previously existed one (Basturkmen 2010:26).

In this respect, Hutchinson et al suggests that

“Designing a course is fundamentally a matter of asking questions in order to provide a reasoned basis for the subsequent processes of syllabus design, materials writing, classroom teaching and evaluation” (Hutchinson et al 1987:21)

In other words, ESP course design is a the basis of inter-related processes that encompasses integrated series of teaching-learning experience such as syllabus design, materials availability and most importantly, data gathered through conducting needs analysis. The latter is considered as a crucial parameter in identifying and analyzing learners’ needs. Consequently, these needs will serve as a guide for for syllabus design, course materials as well as teaching and testing methods.

1.5. Approaches to course design

1.5.1. Language-centred course design:

Language-centred approach put emphasis on the linguistic performance of the learner in the target situation. This approach is considered to have the simplest kind of course design process which begins with identifying learners’ target situation, proceeds through various stages of analysis to a syllabus, then to materials in use in the classroom, and finally to evaluation of mastery of the syllabus items. The diagram below clearly elucidates how the language-centred approach is elaborated.

Despite its seemingly logical procedure, Language-centered approach has been criticized on grounds that it disregards the integral role that learners’ needs play in the process of designing an ESP course. Nevertheless, this approach was regarded as a static and an inflexible procedure whose limits end with the end of target situation analysis.

Once the initial analysis of the target situation is done, the course designer is locked into a relentless
process. Any procedure must have flexibility, feedback channels and Error tolerance built in so that it can respond to unsuspected or developing countries” (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:67)

1.5.2. Skills-centred course design:
The skills-centred approach to course design focuses on the development of Skills and strategies that should remain active after the ESP course, by making learners better processors of information. Unlike the previous approach, Skills-centred approach tends to compensate between performance and competence in presenting its learning objectives.

In this vein, this model views the learner as a user of language rather than as a learner of language and the processes it is concerned with focus more on language use, not language learning (Hutchinson and Waters, 1987). Thus, it is more concerned with language use than language learning.

![A skills-centred approach to course design](ibid)

1.5.3. Learning-centred course design:
As one of the prominent approaches in recent educational research, Learning-centred approach is based on humanist doctrines mainly of John Dewey and Carl Rogers who emphasize the role of “active learning” and “participatory learning” in building the learning experience. Hence, learning-centred approach considers the learner as a core component in designing a course on the premise that the learner’s motivation, previous knowledge and learning experience would greatly contribute in construct an educational course.

1.6 Needs Analysis
According to The Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (2000), the verb “to need” is defined as the following: “to require something/somebody because they are essential or very important, not just because you would like to have them”. Generally speaking, a need constitutes the gap between current conditions and desired conditions.

Needs Analysis, also known as needs assessment, is the process through which different learners’ needs are identified and analyzed. The term “analysis of needs” was originated by Michael West in 1920’s as an attempt to investigate why learners should learn English and how they do so.

In this vein, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998, p.125) defined Needs Analysis as “professional information about the learners: The tasks and activities learners are/will be using English for [“target situation analysis and objective Needs”]. Accordingly, Needs Analysis ‘fundamental question is “For what purpose is the learner learning the language?”

Needs Analysis, thus, is an indispensable stage in ESP. In fact “The idea of analysing the language needs of the learner as a basis for course development has become almost synonymous with ESP”. (McDonough 1984:29). It provides ESP teachers with in-depth insights to the actual needs, wants and lacks of their learners. Hence, learners are viewed as partners and co-creators. This enables teachers as well as course designers make the right decisions about content and methodology. i.e., to construct “remedial “courses that meets the needs of their learners.

Nevertheless, Needs Analysis should not be considered as a preliminary phase. In fact, it is “an on-going process” that provides teachers the suitable platform for designing their courses in an ad-hoc manner by developing tests, materials, teaching activities and evaluation strategies.

1.7 Models of Needs Analysis
1.7.1. Target Needs Analysis
The term “Target needs” refers to the academic or professional requirements the learner aims at obtaining. According to Hutchinson and Waters (1987), target needs can be classified into three main types

a. Necessities:
Necessities are simply the types of needs determined by the demands of the target situation (ibid). i.e., the required level of language proficiency in order to function effectively in the target situation. They are also known as objectives

b. Lacks:
As it is apparent from its name, Lacks express the gap between the learner’s present competence and desired competence. A thorough comparison between these two levels would be a valuable tool for teachers
to identify learner’s deficiencies and, Thus construct a syllabus that would take these "lacks" into consideration.

c. Wants:
Wants represent the learner’s subjective point of view of their "necessities" and "lacks". In other words, wants are the learner’s consciousness of his linguistic proficiency, current deficiency as well as prospective linguistic skills in order to be an effective user of the target language. Nevertheless, These views may conflict with the perception of other interested parties: course designers, sponsors, teachers (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:56)

Hutchinson et al propose an analytical framework for Target Needs. This includes answering the following questions:
" Why is the language needed? 
" How will the language be used? 
" What will the content areas be? 
" Who will the learners use the language with? 
" Where will the language be used? 
" When will the language be used? 

1.7.2 Learning Needs Analysis

Learning needs are "what the learner needs to do to actually acquire the language." Robinson (1991: 7). They are linked with cognitive, sociological and methodological needs of the learners. In addition, this type of needs analysis includes information about aims of the course, the type of learners, the available materials, the time load as well as the strategies that learners employ in order to learn the target language.

1.8. Syllabus Design

1.8.1. Definition of Syllabus

A syllabus is a document, which says what will (or at least what should) be learnt. (Hutchinson and Waters 1987:80). It is roadmap of teachers that include the subjects to be presented and how the language structures and tasks are organized in order to meet the specific set of objectives.

In this respect, Corder asserts that a syllabus is "the overall plan of the learning process. It, too, must specify what components or learning items must be available or learned by a certain time and what is the most efficient sequence in which they are learned" (Corder 1973:296)

Furthermore, Yalden posits, "the syllabus is now seen as an instrument by which the teacher, with the help of the syllabus designer, can achieve a degree of 'fit' between the needs and aims of the learner (as social being and as individual) and the activities which will take place in the classroom. (Yalden 1984: 14)qtd in David Nunan, Syllabus Design,p

To put in a nutshell, a syllabus is a plan of work which elucidates the systematic process for the teaching/learning process. It has an important role for any teacher, syllabus designer or materials writer.

1.8.2. Factors affecting Syllabus Design:

A syllabus is the teacher’s agenda of a course’s content and methodology. In other words, it clearly states what is to be taught and how to be taught. Based on this, designing a syllabus cannot happen in isolation. In fact, a number of parameters are involved in the syllabus design process.

In this vein, Dubin and Olshtain (1986) clarify these parameters in the following diagram:

Figure 01.03: Environmental Factors affecting in course design /Dubin and Olshtain (1986, p06)

As it is illustrated above, the answers to a number of questions provide information about the overall Teaching/Learning environment. For instance, determining the target population (learners), the language setting as well as the learners’ attitudes towards the course. These criteria contributes in determining the
design policy.
Generally, the design of a syllabus is influenced by a set of environmental constraints:
"’ The language setting which concerns the role of the language in the community (as a mother tongue, a second language, or a foreign language).

"’ The areas of language use in society (How and where is it used?)

"’ The role of the language in political life taking into account the country”’s economy and technology (Ashworth, 1985 a).

"’ The attitudes of groups and individuals towards the language . This is determined by the degree of their awareness of the language (Vanlier , 1995) (qutd in Benmansour Radia, 1999: 30)

1.9. The ESP syllabus:
As it has been mentioned before, a syllabus is a statement about the content and methodology of the course. It clearly states what should be taught and in what sequence.
Amidst this contextualization, what is self-evident that designing an ESP course is far from being an easy task. In fact, ESP teachers”” syllabi must improve learners”” grammatical proficiency, communicative competence as well as increasing their terminological register in the target language.
Based on this , it is the task of the teacher to choose from the plethora of language syllabi , the appropriate syllabus that leads to effective results .It is , thus , an extension to the stage of needs analysis that clarify the needs of the learners.
Whether it is a Content-based, structural, task-based or functional-notional syllabus. The ESP should be adjustable, open-ended and subject to regular revision.
After choosing the adequate syllabus, the teacher or course designer has to select the appropriate teaching materials.
1.9.1 Teaching materials:
It is evident that materials are an indispensable stage in teaching. They have a crucial role in determining the content of the course. Hutchinson and Waters argue that the material development process takes a great amount of time for ESP teachers because of their importance in providing a stimulus to learning.
In this respect , Allwright (1990) argues that materials should teach students to learn, they should be resource books for ideas and activities for instruction/learning, and that they should give teachers rationales for what they do (qtd in .
ESP teachers, thus, should to provide materials that are both challenging and interesting for their learners in order to stimulate their thinking capacities to consolidate and enhance their skills.
1.9.2 Teaching:
There is no single or straightforward way of teaching people to learn. In fact, teaching takes places in a variety of styles and settings taking into account a number of educational, psychological and methodological factors for both teachers and learners.
For any teaching situation, the teacher””s role is to ensure the learners”” effective assimilation of the content .Language teachers”” ultimate task, then, is to enable students to use the target language effectively.
In the case of ESP context, the role of the ESP teacher does not differ from the general English teacher .In fact, an ESP teacher is:"”"”a teacher of General English who has unexpectedly found himself/herself required to teach students with special needs.”” Strevens (1988:41). This means that an ESP teacher is basically a General English teacher who has to deliver his courses in a tailor made way in order to cater the specific needs of his learners. Nevertheless, many teachers found themselves unable to meet their learners”” academic objectives because they lack proper training in ESP teaching.
Thus, the ESP teacher””s work involves much more than instructing. An efficient ESP teacher has to perform various duties; he has to be a course designer material provider, a researcher, a collaborator and an evaluator.

1.9.3 Evaluation and Assessment in ESP teaching :
As the final step of any syllabus design, assessment and evaluation are integral components that constitute the critical platform for stakeholders (learners and teachers).

In order to achieve more prominent results, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) propose two levels of evaluation:

"Learner"'s assessment:
It is axiomatic that a high quality teaching can be achieved through maintenance and ongoing development. Thus, assessment plays an integral role in the ESP course because it is the “barometer” that quantifies teachers’ attainment of the selected goals and objectives set by the process of needs analysis.

In this respect, Richards and Renandya (2002) suggest that assessment yields an observed judgement of the effectiveness of teaching. i.e., learner’s assessment helps to check learner’s performance and detect any linguistic problems in order to suggest remedies for the following courses.

Furthermore, Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998: 210) assert that:
“Assessment encompasses benefits such as reinforcement, confidence building, involvement and building on strengths”

"Course evaluation:
From the perspective of Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), evaluation does not stand alone, but occupies a prominent place in the ESP process, giving an ESP teacher a wealth of information on the effectiveness of learning and teaching.

Course evaluation, thus, enables the teacher to assess whether or not the objectives have been met.

All in all, both levels of evaluation provide the necessary feedback for the teacher and the learner in order to enhance and enrich the overall teaching/learning experience.

1.10 Conclusion:

This chapter has tried to give a clear idea about ESP approach, its various definitions, origins and its branches. It has also shed light on Syllabus, its design methodology and its process. In addition, it has shown the different approaches to course design and the importance of needs analysis in ESP syllabus design. The following chapter will constitute the practical part of the research.

The researcher will conduct a needs analysis at the chosen department and analyze the findings accordingly.

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